



I. **FIRST TOPIC:** **“CONSECRATION TO THE PASSION” IN THE DYNAMIC OF THE CONSECRATION GOD ACCOMPLISHED IN US THROUGH THE PASCHAL MYSTERY**

0. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this reflection is the title of our Constitutions that begin numbers 5 and 6 (*De nostra Consecratione Passioni Jesu*) and other references within the same constitutions. Seeks to establish: (1) first, the uniqueness of its placement in the Constitutions in the reformulation of 1984; (2) secondly, a reflection on the concept of "consecration" as the action of God understood as "Configurator-Facilitator" that takes a special form in baptismal consecration and religious consecration. (3) And as such "consecration '*to the Passion*'", its specificity or peculiarity.

The elements that must be taken into account in order to enter into the specific reflection:

1. Ecclesial context, which is the process of formation. In the perspective of the Ecclesiology of communion, with baptismal origins, underlined in the Second Vatican Council.
 - Diversity of modes of Christian existence in complementarity and interdependence. The original baptismal reality and its diversity resulting from the overabundance of life in the Spirit in the people of God, Body of Christ.
2. The Christological reference: the dynamics of charism and grace as a response to following and discipleship in mission.
3. The Trinitarian and Paschal perspective of Christian existence.
4. The “charismatic families”—their uniqueness.

I. **FORMULATION AND INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION of the “SPECIAL VOW”**

The juridical-canonical formulation of the vow to “promote among the faithful the grateful memory of the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Cap.XVI) [1] has been present throughout the history of the Congregation through a series of practices and texts that facilitated their enactment and the fulfillment of the goal included within the vow.

A brief historical overview reveals the tension between the charismatic momentum and the necessary institutionalization directed toward a referential, enduring and transmissible incarnation.

Subsequently, the generations after the time of the Founder collected his life history and customs as a practical incarnation of the realization of the Passionist vocation. For example, the life of the Founder by St. Vincent Strambi and other writings about the first companions.

A. **A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

Fr. Fabiano Giorgini affirms: "In order to explain the Passionist charism Paul (St. Paul of the Cross) generally used the word 'memory', which is almost always preceded by the adjective 'grateful'... He also frequently uses the word 'devotion', preceded sometimes by the adjective 'solid' or 'true' to highlight that this is not about 'devotional practices' but about 'devotion'... From the very beginning the word 'memory' appears in the Rule when he explains 'why' we dress in mourning and about the purpose of the Congregation. On the other hand, describing the profession, the text of the Rule of 1736 and 1741 used the word 'devotion', which is found in the title of the chapter that explains how to observe the specific vote. The text of



1746, in both cases, uses the formula: "Promote religious devotion and the grateful memory of the Passion and death of Jesus..." However, in the juridical formula for the profession of vows, the expression of 1741 remains: "promote the Passion of the Lord in the hearts of the faithful to the extent that their hearts are capable."

The official texts of the Holy See, which approved the Congregation used with preference the formula "To promote the memory" of the Passion of Jesus. Thus, for example, the redactors of 1746 speak of the vote to promote devotion to the holy mysteries of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The redactors of 1769 highlight the obligation of the Passionist religious to "inspire and promote the grateful memory and devotion of the Holy Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ". The Bull of Approbation of 1769 identifies the "vow to promote the veneration of the Holy Cross and the grateful memory of the Passion" of Jesus Christ. Almost the same terms are found in 1775." [2]

Fr. Artola concludes his study in this way: "Summing up the study of the stylistic analysis of paulicrucian texts about the Passion as the purpose of the Congregation and as a form of Christian life style, we could say first of all that both the purpose and the experience referred to in these texts, cannot be limited to a purely devotional concept. Rather, it is necessary to highlight the variety of expressions used to imply the richness of content of the lived experience and its foundational ideas. However, it is not difficult to focus our attention on two key ideas expressed in the binomial devotion-memory or memory-cult. If it were necessary to indicate the nature of each of these expressions, we would say that memory is more primitive and closer to the founding inspiration, and closer to the biblical categories relating to the Passion of Christ through sacramental renewal, almost exclusively in the text of the Rules since the revision of 1746. In terms of devotion, while that expression appears later and is less numerically present in the text of the Rules from 1746, however, in the preceding editing it appears more times than memory, in formal legal contexts, arriving at a central place and included in the same formula of the vows". [3]

In the correspondence of St. Paul of the Cross we find the phrase that became the motto of the Congregation: "*Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi sit semper in cordibus nostris.*" Towards 1736, it begins to appear sporadically in his letters, for example in the letter to Agnes Grazi (*Lettera I. 144*)

B. THE "INNOVATION" IN THE PLACEMENT AND FORMULATION WITHIN THE CONSTITUTIONS (1984) SINCE VATICAN COUNCIL II

a. The placement and primary significance

Everything related to the "special vow" underwent, in the recent renewal of the fundamental texts prepared because of Vatican II, changes of vital importance. In the "Chapter Decree" of the special Chapter in the years 1968-1970, the so-called fourth vow occupied place first. This can be seen even in something as fundamental as the Formula of Profession. [4]

Stated in the Decree of Approbation: "the Congregation of the Passion... has as its specific objective recalling and promoting the memory of the Passion through its life and apostolate, especially that of preaching... This purpose, ratified with a special vow, influences the religious consecration of its members and favors the unity of its life and apostolate". The circular letter of Fr. Paul Boyle affirms and highlights this innovation: "One of the aspects of these revised Constitutions is the clear and strong focus on the memory of the Passion of Jesus. This special vow is our first mission and characteristic, which gives character and form to the way we live and work... The memory of the Passion permeates our expression of the three traditional evangelical counsels and characterizes our life of prayer, fraternity and apostolate. In numerous texts, the



Constitutions remind us the central place that this mystery has in every aspect of our life... I sincerely pray that the centrality given by the Constitutions to our vow of the Passion helps us to seek and find the language, mode of work and other more effective responses to this important mission in the Church" [5].

On the 250th anniversary of the approval by rescript of the Rules and Constitutions, Fr. José Agustín Orbegozo, wrote: "Number 5, of our Constitutions states that the eternal scandal of God is the central point of unity: 'We seek the union of our life and of our apostolate in the Passion of Jesus Christ'. Thus, consecration to the Passion of Christ would return to the center, focusing our lives and finding our center in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Our spirituality is distinguished by making the Passion of Christ the source of inspiration and the organizing principle of our life and of our apostolate... This special vow is "a source of energy that sustains and enlightens the other three traditional vows: 'In the light of this, we seek to incorporate this vow into our daily lives by living the evangelical counsels.' (Const. 6) Therefore, it does not deal with the fourth vow, but the specific vow that defines our lives. We have a particular way of living the traditional vow, a way of living religious life. The specific vow is our way of being Christian and religious... This new context... radically overcomes the famous dualism of the purpose of the Congregation (self-perfection and the sanctification of others) and the dimensions of our life (contemplative and active)." [7]

b. The formulation and the indicated references

For the renewal and new formulation of the Constitutions or Rules, they followed the criteria proposed by the documents of the Council. Fundamentally, they followed the criterion of the *Motu Proprio "Ecclesiae Sanctae"* that pointed out the union of two elements, the spiritual and the juridical, so that the main texts of the institutes have a stable foundation and are penetrated by a vital spirit. Therefore, care should be taken that a text that is not only legal or merely exhortative. [8]

This criterion assured that the formulation and expression that was legally binding in the preceding Rules rediscover elements for their expression and experience. Additionally, the Constitutions would contain explicit expression in its elementary components of a theology of the Christian life conformable to the consecration to the Passion expressed in the "Evangelical counsels", as well as other forms of life.

The language used stemmed from the spirituality of the Passion as experienced, announced and proposed by St. Paul of the Cross within the tradition of the Congregation and is formulated with a great wealth of terms. [9] It is expressed in the key word, "participation" in the Passion of Christ (nº.6), of "following of Christ crucified" (nº.4), "union with Christ crucified, above all in the Paschal mystery" (39); We are "configured to his death and resurrection" (50); the contemplation of the mystery of the Passion urges us toward continuous conversion (56) as "configuration with Christ crucified"; "We express our configuration with Christ crucified" - in the Apostolic commitment - (57); Paschal dynamics in paragraphs 64 and 65. [10] Other elements: in the light of this relationship we live the Evangelical counsels (n.6); language of meditation and contemplation that enriches the language and the practice of prayer in order to fulfill the "fullness of the Christian vocation by the word of the cross;" Identification of the "Passion for Christ, passion of the humanity" (n.3). In addition "We seek the unity of our life and the apostolate in the Passion of the Christ" (nº.5).

c. The following are some particular points:



1. The conforming centrality, that configures and conforms the Consecration to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ expressed in a vow that is rooted in baptismal consecration.
2. The use of the term “Paschal Mystery” (No. 50, 64, 65) to indicate those moments, that are intimately related to this event—Passion-death and Resurrection.
3. The implication of the category relative to the Cross in the being and power of God (nos. 3 and 5) “revelation of the power of God.
4. Formulation of the concept, “Word of the Cross” (“Verbum Crucis”), ministry of the Word of the Cross to refer to the mission and apostolate.
5. Global reference to evils and their causes... pointing to those who "today are crucified" Affirming the today of the Passion of Christ in his mystical body and in the humanity of all times. Christ-Passion of humanity as a single mystery (No.3), "the only mystery of salvation" (65).
6. The category of following: “personal call of the Father”... (No.4) and conversion via the contemplation of the Passion and acceptance of its saving power.
7. Use of the category of meditation (nº.50) and contemplation (n °. 39.cf. 5, 56) to refer is to the mode of relationship with the Passion, along with the insistence on the Paschal sacramental dimension: Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation.

The description of the elements involved in the category of 'Consecration to Passion' would facilitate the formulation of the particular identity of the "charismatic Passionist family" beyond the limited reference to consecrated life as specified in the three evangelical counsels.

I would consider the explication of these elements to be especially fruitful: modes of expressing consecration; identification of the Passion of Christ and the passion for humanity; reference to the Paschal mystery; binomial meditation-contemplation, and all of this in the community and communal “we”.

II. “CONSACRATION/SANCTIFICATION” AND “CONSACRATION TO THE PASSION.” SOME PERSPECTIVES (A explanatory reflection)

The category of consecration has become part of sacramentary theology and ecclesiology by linking it to baptismal consecration. It has become also the specific category to describe the way of life that is expressed in the profession of the evangelical counsels. It is also with the element of "the Passion" is the formulation of our uniqueness.

Some basic beliefs that guide reflection and are presupposed and to some extent developed are the following:

1. The concept of consecration/sanctification has God as the first and fundamental agent. Jesus is consecrated by the Father and of his consecration makes us participants in his Paschal dynamic expressed sacramentally in Baptism and the Eucharist.
2. Consecration/sanctification is what the Lord - by the dynamism of his Spirit - accomplished in us in order to immerse us in the dynamic of the Paschal mystery. The theological element is the foundation of the existential activity: the passivity-docility-which enables us to receive the active action within us will be the formulation of our response to the Covenant in the dynamic of the evangelical counsels in response to his call and consecration.
3. The 'CONSECRATION to Passion', is the CONSECRATION that the Passion of the Lord accomplishes in us.
4. We consecrate ourselves to the Passion of the Lord and thus we participate in his same dynamism. Therefore, it goes beyond simple dedication, occupation or specialization. The basic thrust is from the perspective of the action of God who consecrates us through



the work of his Spirit. Moreover, it effects those dynamics that express, perform and increase it in an exercise of freedom that is founded on it.

5. The semantic richness makes explicit that which formulated the Constitutions and is the frame of reference for that which becomes for us the testimony of the permanent actuality of the donation of the Spirit and its "permanent fertility". The linguistic framework allows each concept or expression to be open to the founding revelation attested to in Scripture and in turn to the permanent flow of the charism given initially to St. Paul of the Cross. Again here it takes up the criteria and the attitude of the "creative fidelity".

When formulating the content of the consecration to the Passion we cannot forget some of the formulations of the spirituality of the Passion and the theological models that deal with this mystery. They have emerged as the unifying categories of appropriation, configuration and participation. Arguably, one can say that these are not alternative or mutually exclusive models. [11]

Some of these models underlie prior theological models that conceptually interpreted the action of God in Jesus Christ concentrated in his Paschal mystery. Some of the classic models are those of revelation, reconciliation, redemption, service, sacrifice and sacrificial atonement. To these were added others. [12]

The "spirituality" of this formative vow was taken from the Rules, the life of the founder and his spiritual experience and the life of the Congregation, attentive to the permanent Kairos that is the History of humankind, as well as *Historia Salutis*.

III. LEVELS OF REFLECTION AND BELONGING THAT INTEGRATE THE CATEGORY OF "CONSECRATION" AND "CONSECRATION TO THE PASSION" in the context of the Paschal Mystery

1. The consecration that the Lord accomplishes in us is inserted into the baptismal consecration involving the Paschal dynamics. Our "consecration to the Passion" accomplishes baptismal consecration in a particular and intense. We should be able to find the peculiarity of religious consecration in this light using some of the models that are proposed such as the symbolic or sacramental, testimonial and prophetic, communal dynamics or parabolic dynamic.
2. The consecration to the Passion that the Lord accomplishes in us enables the dynamics by which by "remembering" we are "become memory" and memorial. The gift and grace facilitate this; however, we perceive that it is the response to the gift that makes it visible, expressed and manifest. In the context of the constitution and the expression of the creation of this "new staurological-paschal subject", the Scriptures create in us a setting composed of, for example, some biblical references: 1Cor.1:19ss; Is.52:13-53:12; Mt.25; Phil.2:6-11. Moreover, leaving us to comply, immersed in this context, expresses what has happened in the *consecrating act that God has accomplished in us in this charismatic mode of existence*.
3. This consecration situates us in a place of revelation that enables a process of emptying and formation for a new sensitivity and radical experience, for a new way of perceiving and receiving, expressed in numerous category-symbol. It creates a new subject in a radical originality in a docile manner open to numerous qualifications received from different contexts. Among them the Church and others. The Consecration creates a "*mode of perceiving*", or a "*new forma of mentis et cordis*".



This ability, the gift of the Spirit, culminates in a particular way in the grace of Baptism highlighting some of the elements that are possessed by all baptized, but rooted in a new way. The Paschal dynamic of death to sin and new life takes on a special radical dimension when lived - in faith - consciously and obediently, the fact that this new element springs from the Paschal submission of the Lord. Grateful and fruitful discipleship and following has its origin in the grace that flows from the Cross that makes one capable of taking on the existential dynamics that shape the being of Jesus and that He expressed in his life history: paternity of God and human fraternity built on love, forgiveness and mercy. Consecration creates an "environment" in the subject, offers him a new strength or "virtue". Furthermore, this same dynamic, the assumption of conflict and suffering. All this dynamism becomes a new reality when the key interpretative and conformational element is in the Passion of the Crucified Lord. This Paschal bonding, charismatically marked, refers to an intense Eucharistic experience, because therein, its culmination is expressed and is offered this Paschal mystery. It also it urges us toward active discipleship in light of grace that forms us from the "Word of the Cross" in the paschal history that is the process of humanity in which God has entered.

4. The consecration to the Passion has to be considered as the "basic foundational experience", the space provided by God as the "fundamental option". God's action creates it and accomplishes it creating and offering dynamics that must become incarnate in the fundamental attitudes that demonstrate and concretize this existence as a new way of life that is offered to us. This experience is not located in a closed and cloistered past, but in itself, it is a dynamic, evolving and empowering. It moves and awakens us to new actions and attitudes and in turn, these claim and express the dynamism that has put them into action. The love of God in its lived essence and recognized as such, is the radical founding experience. This gives rise to actions that have their origin in it; and in turn, actions in the logic of the love that reveal and express it; at the same time that they confirm it rooting the person more deeply in it.
5. The consecration to the Passion lived in the horizon that St. Paul of the Cross offers us, immerses us in the "Trinitarian communion", in a interpersonal with God that encounters us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The love given and expressed that constitutes the heart of the mystery of God and his way of interacting with human beings, creation and history, shown in the truth of the Passion of the Son as an expression of the love of the Father and of the self-emptying dynamism of the Spirit. The mystery of the God-Trinity opens a new perception and experience when the gift of the Spirit plunges us into the pro-existence and supportive humanity of Jesus acting 'from' the Father and in his loving will. In the historical fabric of its existence, when this love takes on its own personal reality, making it the patient subject of human violence, of sin, it produces this radical transformation of sin in reconciliation, life and existence in communion. That historic moment with all that precedes it and is accomplished through it, is the indispensable concretization, manifestation and realization of his being love in history and in the creation. Hence, the reference to this realization - never cancelled in its radical essence - is invincible and irreplaceable because in it the whole Trinity acts and manifests itself making the Pasion-Death-Resurrection a Trinitarian action, preceded by the Incarnation-Creation and open to the action of consummation-completeness.



6. The consecration to the Passion of the Crucified-Risen Lord is the historical "anchor" that opens to the immensity of the mystery of God. It is the place where in its implementation we see the totality of God's faithfulness, his radical commitment to creation, humanity and history. This is the way in which God, lovingly and pedagogically has decided to offer himself, entering history in order to become a "You" offered and interactive, able to fit in history anchoring himself in it. It is the *"concrete rootedness"* in the loving, sacrificing Being of God brings us in to Him, and through Him we have insight into the immensity that is not limited by the concrete, but expands it, becoming the key to assimilate it and envelope everything. The interdependent and internal moments of this event do not overlap, annulling it; but it offers a comprehensive and growing interpenetration: the Passion that leads to death anticipates the dynamism of the Resurrection and in this is found latent and acting loving power that is constituted in the offering of the Passion until death. In addition, death is the expression of the dynamism of the Passion and the unifying force that raises Him. The historic face of God expressed in Jesus Christ and in the depth of his incarnation expressed in the extreme form of His truth in the Paschal mystery is the possibility for a the new beginning, of a way of knowing God not merely noetic but theological. In this happens definitively through communication which offers redemption, new life, Trinity dwelling. This event not only reveals the eternal salvific will of God, but also accomplishes it in the absolute uniqueness of the historical reality.
7. Consecration to the Passion that Dios has accomplished becomes a response in the attitude or dynamism of memory and memorial; also from the more classical category of pious remembrance or recollection. These formulations already present in the historical origin of the Congregation, expressed the difficulty of expressing in a single concept or a single practice the dynamism of the initial offering and that hopefully continues with its radical uniqueness and dynamism. The biblical reality that underlies the concept of memory and memorial not only evokes the commemorative action of human activity that goes back to the past for living it and rescuing it from the time. Rather, it refers to the permanence of the faithful God that continues with his saving historical action and through remembering we are immersed in the same dynamism of God that does not enclose his fidelity in a fact of time, but remains always open to demonstrate new ways of his Presence and Action. Applied to the Lord in his Passion the memory or the recollection to do not bring us back to a closed moment of history, but allows us to enter into the dynamism that it accomplished and that continues to be offered in its entirety. Remembering makes us live consciously, inviting us to make a response that is the fruit of the historical welcoming and lived experience that it proposes to us.
8. The consecration to the Passion in the dynamic of the Paschal mystery raises as a response, in this Christian way of life that is consecrated life, the unique experience of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. These are not added to the experience of the consecration to the Passion but are a way of living it, as seen in the particular consecration "to the Passion". Understanding vows as dynamics, gifts of the Spirit, to live certain dimensions of human existence to the Kingdom of God in this charismatic way, we are confident that also the Spirit conforms us in a "Passionist" way to be able to live them and conform us by the particular consecration. Hence in our Constitutions the motivations by which we live out each of the dimensions that are represented



the vows are draw life from the Crucified Lord employing even biblical texts that place us before the Lord, who was "obedient unto death", "stripped and humbled", "with love, even to offering his life". *We could say that the mode of experiencing the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience is the way of expressing the consecration to the Passion, the specificity of the primary vow.*

1. Cap. XVI de la regla de 1775 aprobada por Pio VI
2. Cf. GIORGINI, F. "Promover la grata memoria y el culto de la Pasión de Jesús, razón de ser de la congregación" en *Ricerche di storia e spiritualità passionista* n.º.15 Roma 1980, traducción P. Carlos Lizarraga cp. Págs.31-32. ARTOLA, A.M. "La memoria de la Pasión y el voto especial de los pasionistas" en *Rev. Teología Espiritual*. Vo.XIX n.º.5 (1975) págs. 559-580.
3. Cf. Fr. ANTONIO MARIA ARTOLA, a.c. págs..569-570.
4. La fórmula de Profesión de la Regla de 1775 decía: "...voveo, et promitto voto...Paupertatem, Castitatem, et Obedientiam, insuper et studium promovendi pro viribus in Fidelium cordibus devotionem Dominicæ Passionis juxta Regulas..."(cap.XI). Las Reglas de 1985 lo expresa así: "...y de seguir de cerca a Cristo Crucificado...hago voto de recordar continuamente la Pasión de Señor y promover su memoria de palabra y de obra. Hago voto también de castidad, pobreza y obediencia...." (n.º.96). Se coloca en primer lugar y se especifica "seguir más de cerca a Cristo Crucificado".
5. Fr. Paul M. BOYLE CP. *Carta Circular con motivo de la Publicación de las Constituciones*. Roma. 15 de abril de 1985.
6. Fr. JOSE AGUSTIN ORBEGOZO. CARTA CIRCULAR N.º.3: "*Nos dedicamos con amor al seguimiento de Jesús Crucificado*" (Const.65). (Carta del 15 de mayo de 1991 con motivo de los 250 años de la aprobación por Rescripto de las Reglas y Constituciones). n.º.2.
7. Cf. also AA.VV. *Reflexiones para el 25 aniversario de la aprobación de las Constituciones*. Estudios de Historia y Espiritualidad Pasionista, n.º.62. Curia General. Roma. 2011.
8. Cf. Muto Propio *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, n.º.12-14; cf. *Lumen Gentium* cap.5-6; *Perfectæ Caritatis*.
9. Algunos de los comentaristas de estos aspectos recogidos en el capítulo primero de las Constituciones son: P. MARTIN BIALAS CP. BIP 5/85.n.º.72 (20 de Abril de 1985); Fr. AUGUSTINE HENNESSY CP. BIP. 6/85.n.º.73 (5 de mayo de 1985); Fr. CONSTANCE BROVETTO CP. BIP 8/85.n.º.75 (20 de Junio 1985)
10. En n.º.65... "Nosotros los pasionistas, tenemos el Misterio Pascual como centro de nuestra vida. Nos dedicamos con amor al seguimiento de Jesús Crucificado y nos preparamos con espíritu de fe y caridad a anunciar su pasión y muerte, no solo como acontecimiento histórico pasado, sino como realidad, ciertamente presente, en la vida de los hombres que 'hoy son crucificados' por la injusticia, por la ausencia de un sentido profundo de la vida humana, y por el hambre de paz, de verdad y de vida. Nuestra vocación nos apremia a alcanzar un profundo conocimiento de la pasión de Cristo y de los hombres, que constituye un único misterio de salvación, a saber: la Pasión del Cristo místico, para que podamos guiar a los fieles a la meditación y a una vida experiencia de este misterio, y llevarlos a más íntima unión con Dios, a mayor conocimiento de sí mismos y a mayor sensibilidad con sus contemporáneos".
11. Cf. Una obra panorámica clásica: B.SESBOUE. *Jesucristo. El único mediador*. Tomo I y II. Ed. Española. Secretariado Trinitario. Salamanca.1990. También J.RATZINGER, BENEDICTO XVI. *Jesús de Nazaret. Tomo II. Desde la entrada en Jerusalén hasta la Resurrección*, analiza especialmente la categoría de sacrificio.